



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
251 Causeway Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114-2119

Mitt Romney
GOVERNOR

Kerry Healey
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ellen Roy Herzfelder
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
or (617) 626-1180

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 22, 2005

CONTACT:
Rena Sumner
413-369-4731

Paul Somers
508-792-7270, x149

**INVASIVE PLANTS LIST ANNOUNCED BY
STATEWIDE COLLABORATIVE PLANT GROUP**
Group Makes Recommendations for Prevention, Control and Eradication

The Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group (MIPAG), a diverse statewide collaborative of organizations, agencies and professionals concerned with the conservation of Massachusetts' natural landscape, has developed a master list of non-native plants that it recognizes as Invasive, Likely Invasive, or Potentially Invasive in the state, and has drafted a strategic plan for addressing the invasive plant issue in the Commonwealth.

The Evaluation of Non-Native Plant Species for Invasiveness in Massachusetts is the first guide of its kind to use objective, scientific criteria to list the invasive plants that threaten native habitats by spreading so prolifically that they crowd out native species in many sensitive forest, wetland and aquatic habitats. The 23-page document is based on evaluations of verified records and scientific literature for each species, and utilizes scientific criteria agreed upon by the members of MIPAG.

Published along with the list of invasive species is a 19-page management plan entitled *Strategic Recommendations for Managing Invasive Plants in Massachusetts* that makes nine recommendations for preventing, controlling and, where possible, eradicating invasive plants. The recommendations are designed for adoption by public and private sector interests throughout the Commonwealth.

"This guide represents years of collaboration, research and scientific study to address the serious invasive plant issue in Massachusetts," said Rena Sumner, Chair of MIPAG. "We are so pleased to be able to provide a document such as this to advise the citizens of the Commonwealth on how they can play a role in meaningfully addressing invasive species."

MIPAG was charged by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) with advising the Commonwealth on which plants are invasive and what steps the state should take to manage these species.

-more-

The key recommendations of the *Strategic Recommendations for Managing Invasive Plants in Massachusetts* include:

- Development of an early detection and rapid response system.
- Prohibition of planting invasive plants by state agencies.
- Adoption of the St. Louis Declaration's voluntary "Code of Conduct" for government, nursery professionals and the gardening public.
- Adoption of MIPAG standards and recommendations for evaluating and managing invasive plants.

The list developed by MIPAG recognizes 66 plant species as assignable to one of three invasiveness groups. The 33 plant species designated as "**Invasive**" are non-native species that have spread into the relatively natural landscapes or habitats of Massachusetts. The second category, "**Likely Invasive**," includes 29 naturalized species that do not meet the full criteria that would trigger the "Invasive" designation, yet meet many of the criteria, and therefore warrant concern. A third category, "**Potentially Invasive**," currently includes four species, and was devised to capture non-native species not currently known to be naturalized in Massachusetts, but that can be expected to become invasive within minimally managed habitats in the Commonwealth.

"The people of Massachusetts love to work in their gardens and meticulously tend their yards, and we all appreciate the beauty provided by our natural landscape," said Massachusetts Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder. "Now we can provide our citizens with real strategies for combating the threat to the integrity of our plant communities by helping people to avoid planting potentially invasive vegetation and suggesting native alternatives."

The effort was led by staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association and the Nature Conservancy. Research for the *Evaluation* and the *Strategic Management Recommendations* was funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association, the Horticultural Research Institute, The Nature Conservancy, and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

"This effort has been a remarkable collaboration," said Tim Abbott of the Nature Conservancy, who lead the committee that developed MIPAG's *Strategic Management Recommendations*. "I am particularly pleased by the commitment of nursery and landscaping leadership in Massachusetts to find a workable solution to the problem of invasive plant species."

Both publications can be found by visiting the following websites: the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association (www.mnla.com), the New England Wild Flower Society (www.newfs.org), the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (www.nhesp.org), or the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group (www.massnrc.org/MIPAG).

###

About MIPAG: The Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group (MIPAG) is a voluntary collaboration between public and private organizations concerned about the problem of invasive plants in Massachusetts. Eighteen entities are represented including state and federal governmental agencies in fish and wildlife, agriculture, and natural resources; the horticulture industry; academic science institutions; land management and nonprofit conservation organizations. Its members affirm their commitment to working within their individual organizations to substantially address the impact of species determined by scientific criteria to be Invasive, Likely Invasive, or Potentially Invasive in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.